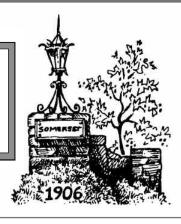


SOMERSET TOWN JOURNAL



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Somerset Election Is March 20 You Must Be Registered To Vote By March 6

Town Election March 20, 2012

By Phyllis Wiesenfelder, Supervisor, Board of Elections

Deadline for Voter Registration is March 6 (registration closes 14 days before Election Day)

Residents can register directly at **Town Hall** Monday through Friday from **9:00 a.m.** to **4:30 p.m.** or by mail by sending completed registration form to **4510 Cumberland Avenue**—if you are registered to vote in **Montgomery County**, you do not need to register to vote in Somerset. The Town has registration forms; please request one by calling **301-657-3211** or by emailing **town@townofsomerset.com**.

To be a qualified voter in Somerset, you must be:

- At least 18 years old by March 20, 2012
- A resident of Somerset for 14 days preceding March 20, 2012
- A citizen of the United States or an alien legally authorized to reside in this Country
- Registered to vote in the Town of Somerset and/or Montgomery County







Calendar

Monday, February 6
Town Council Meeting

Monday, February 20 Office Closed for Presidents Day

Monday, February 27 MVA Mobile Office

Don't forget to check the Town website throughout the month for an up-to-date calendar. Go to *www.townofsomerset.com* and click on **Town Calendar**.

The Preliminary Agenda for each month's Town Council meeting is posted on the Town website (www.townofsomerset.com) seven days prior to the meeting. A copy is also posted on the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch.



On My Mind

By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Town Committee Report

From time to time, I like to write about our vital **Town committees** and bring everyone up to date on this important part of our **municipal government**. The Town truly could

not function as effectively without the hard work and dedication of all the **resident volunteers** who serve as committee members; their recommendations help the **Council** and **Mayor** make better decisions in a variety of areas.

Most of you know that some committees are provided for in our **Charter** and **Town Code**, such as for *elections, swimming pool*, and *special events*, and these members are nominated by the Mayor and require Council approval, while others are of an *ad hoc, temporary nature*, and are appointed by the Mayor alone, such as for **Pepco** issues and personnel. Both make recommendations that lead to *Code amendments, purchases of goods* and *services*, and *improved policies* of all sorts. The expertise and research provided is invaluable because it takes the burden off the staff, lessens the need for more staff, and supplements the work of the Council members, who already have a lot on their plates.

Several committees have been working overtime recently, and I want to applaud their efforts. The **Ad Hoc Tennis Committee** is helping us review the court rules—important because there were many complaints last season—and they are looking into a *better playing surface*, and advising us on the possible structure of a permanent committee, which most of us feel is essential for the future. Since no one on the Council is a tennis regular, you can see how helpful it is to have an informed group to fill in the knowledge gaps. Likewise, the **Environmental Committee** is addressing *storm water management* and *composting*; the

Parks and Natural Resources Committee is looking at *tree policies* that have not been reviewed in years; and the Pepco group has met with top officials from the utility. We will be forming a new **Swim Team Committee**, and we will rely on the **Ad Hoc Personnel Committee** to help establish a badly needed procurement policy.

Since there is often confusion about term lengths and expiration for committee members, our **Town Manager** has suggested that we have all the terms begin and end at the same time each year. This is an excellent idea, because it will create an annual "committee open season," and we can all focus on ensuring we have the strongest committees possible. Please bear with us as we work towards that goal.

In the interim, there are usually vacancies, and not enough candidates for committee positions. It is my hope that all in Town would serve on at least *one committee* during their residency in Somerset, and the more diverse the views, the better.

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Town Election, March 20, 20121

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www.townofsomerset.com

Please let us know if you prefer to receive the Journal via email.

Please provide your email address to the Editor at *maxinea@comcast.net*.

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TOWN HALL

Open: 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday thru Friday 301-657-3211 Fax: 301-657-2773 TTY users call Maryland Relay

Maxine Finkelstein, Editor Deadline for ads and copy is the 15th of the month at 4:30 p.m.

Community Service Day Benefits Several Groups

By P. Kaye Hanifee, Falstone Avenue

The Town's annual Community Service day was held on Saturday, December 17. A number of residents and families participated in *sorting toiletries* and *food, sandwich-making*,



Steve Shapiro and Kristine Farley encourage kids to help the community

and
assembling
catnip
toys—all
of which
benefitted
several
local
non-profits,
including

the Community Council for the Homeless at Friendship Place, the Dorothy Day Place Women's Shelter, Chase Partnership Men's Shelter, and Montgomery County Coalition for



Mayor Slavin and P. Kaye Hanifee on Community Service Day

the
Homeless
Men's
Emergency
Shelter. All
three
shelters are
in

Rockville. The *catnip*

toy project was a huge hit with the kids who participated, and the finished products were taken to the Humane Society of Montgomery



Council Member Bill Farley and some of the local children helping on Community Service

The success of this event was due, in large part, to the generous donations

(both in

County.

kind and monetary), from *Town*residents and the *business*

community. Whole Foods Market and Giant Foods in Friendship Heights, and the new Safeway on Arlington Road all donated gift cards we used to purchase *toiletries* and *non-perishable snacks* to boost the donations that were dropped off.

With so much need in our County, it is wonderful to have such an easy way to come together as a community for a couple of hours and lend a hand. We hope to boost our efforts for projects next year and get more people involved. As always, **SSL hours** are provided for students. If you are interested in helping plan one or two of these events in **2012**, please email **P. Kaye Hanifee**, at **pkaye.hanifee@gmail.com**.

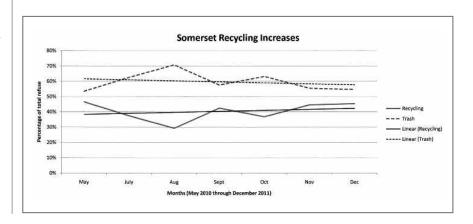
Recycling Update

George Wyeth, Chairman, Environmental Committee

| | July-Dec 2010 | Jan-June 2011 | July-Dec 2011 | Dec 2011 |
|---------------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|-------------|
| Percent Recycled | 39.3% | 45.7% | 43.8% | 43.2% |
| Amount Recycled | 111.74 | 120.23 | 110.19 | 23.10 |
| Total Trash and Recycling | 283.99 | 263.13 | 251.38 | 53.52 |

Somerset residents are consistently recycling between 40 and 50 percent of their total waste (by weight). As the graph below shows, recycling picked up during 2010, possibly because the large wheeled bins made it easier, and leveled off in 2011 in the mid-40 percent range. Let's see if we can get our average above 50 percent (which we did once, in May 2011). The guidelines on what is recyclable are found on the committee website, http://www.townofsomerset.com/environment/Recycling.html.

Another way to reduce the volume of trash is to **compost**; services are springing up that will collect compostable materials for a fee, and return a portion to the resident or to the Town.



Notes From The Manager's Desk

By Rich Charnovich, Town Manager



Town Hall Top 10 List

Each month I will attempt to do my best to inform our residents on 10 important issues I currently see happening within the Town of Somerset. As always, if anyone has any questions regarding Town operations, please feel free to contact me at Town Hall at *manager@townofsomerset.com* or 301-657-3211.



E-Journal Sign-Up

We would like to urge as many residents as possible to receive their **Town Journal** electronically. As a **Tree City USA** and a **PLANT Maryland Community**, Somerset wants to reduce its impact on the environment by encouraging residents to receive their copy of the Town Journal by email. If you are not currently on the Town Journal email distribution list and would like to receive an electronic copy, please contact Town Hall at **manager@townofsomerset.com** or at **301-657-3211**.

Crime Alert

In response to the recent crime wave that has hit the Chevy Chase/Bethesda area; the Town has increased the hours its contracted police officers work for the *public safety* of the Somerset community. Please report all suspicious persons and vehicles immediately to the Police at 301-279-8000 or 911. This includes solicitors going door to door who appear to be suspicious. Never let a suspicious person into your home. *Reminder:* Free home security surveys by Officer Dana Stroman, 240-876-1277 by appointment, to assess security risks of your residence. *Here are some safety recommendations for those of you who do a lot of walking for either work or leisure:*

- Walk briskly, with your head up, eyes scanning, and alert to your surroundings.
- Avoid using ear buds or headphones, and avoid talking on a cell phone while walking.
- Walk in groups whenever possible

- Trust your instincts; if someone makes you feel uncomfortable, avoid them by changing your direction and increasing your pace; go directly to a well-lit public place if possible.
- Call the police immediately and report any suspicious person or circumstance.

Tax Season Approaching

Somerset's **largest source** of revenue is the portion of the State income tax paid by Town residents. **Unfortunately**, Somerset will not get its share of income taxes unless our name appears on the **Maryland** income tax form in the box marked, "City, Town or Taxing Area." Please do not forget to complete this section when filling out your taxes.

New Calendar On Website

As **technology evolves** each day, we do our best to keep up with the times. Please take a moment to review the "revamped" calendar on our Town's website with activities happening at the Town Hall and elsewhere. Here you will find many activities that may interest you. I am very interested in exploring other technologies in the future that could better help to disseminate information including the possible creation of a "Somerset App" and the usage of Twitter and other social media. The Town's current email blast really is just the tip of the iceberg. Suggestions are always welcome.

Winter Season Is Here

A few reminders as the winter season has arrived. Mulheron Tree Experts will again be the Town's contractor for snow removal. Regarding sidewalk cleaning, please be advised that the

continued on page 6

Council Regular Meeting Actions - January 3, 2011 Meeting

The Town Council met in regular session on January 3, 2011. The Council took the following actions:

- 1. Approval of the December 5, 2011 Regular Council Meeting Minutes.
- 2. Approval of PCO 80 for the Pool House Renovation Project for \$251.75.
- 3. Approval of Invoice submitted by Balodemas Architects dated January 3, 2012 for \$5,940.00.
- 4. Approval of the application submitted by John and Sue Rosenthal, 5529 Surrey Street, for a replacement HVAC Unit that has already been installed.
- 5. Approval of a plan revision submitted by Mitchell and Simone Narins for revision of the rear deck from 7.5'x10.5' to 18'x23'at 4909 Essex Avenue as recommended by the Town Inspector.
- 6. Approval of a partial recommendation by the Council acting as the Local Advisory Panel to the Historic Preservation Commission on an application submitted by Alexandria P. Dubois of 4712 Cumberland Avenue. The Council recommended a two-story rear addition with basement to the rear of the current house. The Council did not recommend a new two-car garage or a new driveway on the West side of the property.
- 7. Approval of Council Member Zeughauser's amendment to the Town's curb cut ordinance. A copy of the approved amendment can be obtained by contacting the Town Hall.
- 8. Approval for Mayor Slavin to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with Amos T. and Robin Wilder, 5535 Warwick Place regarding a fence in the rear of their property.
- 9. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Phyllis Wiesenfelder (Cumberland) to the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Her term will expire December 31, 2013.
- 10. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Sherry Bindeman Kahn (Essex) to the Board of Supervisors of Elections. Her term will expire December 31, 2014.
- 11. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Bill Marmon (Cumberland) to the Board of Supervisors of Elections. His term will expire December 31, 2014.
- 12. Approval of the Mayor's re-nomination of Barbara Condos as Chairperson of the Swimming Pool Committee. Her term will expire on December 31, 2012

In addition to the items approved at the Regular Meeting, the Council also heard the Financial Report from the Town Manager, Richard Charnovich, and a Pool House renovation update from Lou Balodemas, Project Manager. Council Member Proctor introduced an amendment to the Town Code to set standards for utility company attachments to poles in public rights of way. It was determined that a meeting would be set up with utility companies to discuss this further. Council Member Proctor also provided an update on an effort to add cost-effective options to Pepco's tariffs for LED street lights. Mayor Slavin's monthly report was available at the meeting for review. He mentioned several additions to his report, including:

- a request for Council Member Proctor to make a proposal regarding the purple line at the March Council Meeting,
- a possible amendment to the Code for the method of 7-day notice of Council meetings,
- a possible Personnel Committee meeting in the near future to discuss potential changes in the Town's ethics code,
- a meeting with Drummond officials on the alleyway by the Somerset School,
- and a possible amendment to the Town Code to change construction hours on Federal holidays.





Snow Removal on Your Property

Town Code states that when **2 inches** of snow or less accumulate in the front or on the side of your property, it is the responsibility of the homeowner to keep those areas clear. *Greater than 2 inches* is the responsibility of the **Town contractor**. Please also be mindful of the plows that clear our roads by doing your best to keep cars parked in driveways as opposed to on the streets. This better enables the roadways to be cleared fully. The batting cage located at the Town Hall is going to be closed this winter season from **December through February**. Snow last year caused some damage to the cage, so this measure is for the protection of it. The cage

will open again in early March. Finally, please keep in the mind the "odd jobs" list that was distributed in the *November Journal* if you are interested in hiring someone for snow shoveling/maintenance around your property during the winter months.

Construction/Parking In The Town

Officials at Town Hall recognize all of the **difficulties** right now with the significant amount of construction occurring in the Town. The Town will continue to enforce its **Code**, **monitor construction projects** and ensure that construction regulations are **reinforced** with applicants, contractors, and sub-contractors for all projects. It is important that the Town do its best to enforce its regulations to minimize disruptions to existing property owners while welcoming those who are moving into the Town. If you are having work done on your home or are building a new home within the Town, *please keep in mind the following regulations:* On weekdays, work cannot start before 7:00 a.m. On Saturdays and Federal holidays, work cannot begin before 9:00 a.m. On Sunday, only interior work that cannot be heard by neighbors can be done. The Town has adopted the same work hour regulations that are administered by Montgomery County. A "Reminders to Builders" document can be found on the Town's website or by contacting the Town Hall. I will be recommending to Mayor Slavin and the Town Council that they consider changing the current Federal Holiday work regulations to parallel that of Sunday interior work only.



Generator Noise Regulations

Enforcement Of Generator Noise Regulations

Many homes in Town either already have generators **installed** or will be applying to install **emergency generators**. Most of these generators have been *unable to pass* the **county noise level requirements**. I am pleased to announce; however, that we have had several generators *recently successfully pass the noise level requirements*. The Town staff and I will be requesting that **mitigation measures** be taken to meet the noise level requirements if the generator hasn't passed yet. This is a very sensitive issue, as we realize that many homes need the generators for

various reasons, but we also must be mindful that the noise of these generators can affect our neighbors. Please contact Town Hall if you would like information on mitigation contractors that are on file. A list of **Acoustical Engineers** can also be located on the **Town's website**.

HVAC Unit Permits

A fact that I don't think many residents realize is that a **Town permit** is required if you are going to **install or replace** any type of **HVAC unit** for your home. **Noise level requirements** must be met for these units as well for the protection of your neighbors. Please contact the **Town Hall** or visit the **Town website** for specific requirements for the installation of HVAC units.

Private And Town Tree Removal Process

This is just a reminder that the Town of Somerset must **approve** any trees to be **removed** within the Town, whether they are **public or privately owned**. Please make sure that you contact the Town Hall to obtain a permit in advance of removing any trees from your property. In accordance with the **Town Code**, violators of this **Ordinance** are subject to fines.

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By Mayor Jeffrey Slavin

Over the past month, there have been *several more violations* of our noise ordinance as contractors have been performing outside work at prohibited hours. Strict warnings have been issued, and in some cases fines imposed. Unfortunately, we discovered that our **Town Code** is inadequate because it does not address **Federal holidays** the way it should. I believe that those days should be just as special as **Sundays**, and I have asked the Council to *amend* the Code so

our residents will have more peace and quiet during their days off.

While I am pleased that in the past four years the Council and many residents have become more engaged and enlightened about the **Town's budget**, the **Montgomery County budget** has a far *greater impact* on our wallets and pocketbooks. What you pay to the County in property taxes is more than *10 times* your Somerset assessment. Therefore, this year I have resolved to have more of us better informed on the County's finances. The **County Executive** recently hosted a forum, and as similar opportunities arise, the Staff and I will publicize them.

Every month we receive newsletters from our neighboring municipalities, and I try to read all of them so I can track trends. This month there was an item written by Mayor David Lublin of the Town of Chevy Chase that gave me pause, as it was about an *increase in burglaries* and *thefts* from autos in his town, which is practically next door to us. The problem is so intense that Chevy Chase has decided to increase its off-duty police coverage to 24-hours-a-day for the remainder of this fiscal year. While I do not think that our Council is prepared to appropriate funding for such coverage, I advise all residents to do their part to help prevent a crime wave here. As Mayor Lublin says, "*it is critical that you do your part by taking the necessary steps to reduce the likelihood of becoming a victim, most simply by removing valuables from vehicles and locking the doors and windows to cars and home. Please report suspicious activity immediately, including the license plate number of suspicious vehicles, and report all crimes no matter how minor." Also, please everyone, use your security systems and turn your outside lights on. Council Vice President Marnie Shaul (Uppingham) and I will be meeting with our new Second District Police Commander David Falcinelli this month and we will ask him for further advice and help*

I am pleased to announce that well-known resident **Alan Dock** (Falstone) has taken over the popular "**All About People**" column. I personally want to thank Council Member **Alan Proctor** (Cumberland) for doing such an outstanding job on this column since his first term. Mr. Dock will always be looking for **household news—awards, trips, new jobs, graduations, significant birthdays, new babies, retirements—and you can forward them by email to** *alandock@hotmail.com***. Be sure to place "All About People" in the subject line. The Journal deadline is always 15th of the month**, so keep that in mind so Alan will get the news well in advance. I look forward to reading his columns throughout the year

The Brown Bag Lunch was well attended again this month. It was a special day, because in addition to the usual format for the lunch, we celebrated Town Manager **Rich Charnovich's** birthday with his favorite cake.

For the tenth year in a row, Community Service Day held last month provided a wonderful opportunity for residents to help others in need at the holiday season. Town residents made sandwiches for the homeless, produced pet toys for the County animal shelter, and put together care packages for underprivileged folks. I personally want to thank Ann Brown (Trent) and P. Kaye Hanifee (Falstone), for their leadership again this year. I also appreciate the hard work of Nicole Ventura of our staff, who secured monetary gifts from local groceries for the first time. In the near future, I will be re-energizing our Community Service Corps, and we will plan more of this kind of project throughout the year

Over the **New Year's weekend**, I was fortunate to attend the renowned **Renaissance Weekend** in **Charleston**, **South Carolina**, which has often been billed as the "world's greatest idea festival." I absorbed a lot of knowledge there that will enhance my service to the Town. What also impressed me over the weekend was the prominent role former residents **Norm Ornstein** and **Judy Harris** (Surrey) played in the event's success, and it reminded me how much I miss having them as neighbors. It is my hope that they will return someday.



Permits Granted



Tree Removal Permits

4807 Grantham Avenue. Red Oak. The tree was hazardous and needed to be removed.

4807 Dorset Avenue. Tulip Poplar. The tree was dead, hazardous and needed to be removed.

5800 Deal Place. *One Black Cherry and two holly shrubs*. The Town Arborist deemed that the hollies were shrubs and did not require a tree removal permit. The Black Cherry tree was hazardous and needed to be removed.

4515 Dorset Avenue. *Norwood Spruce*. The tree is actively leaning towards the house and is hazardous. The owner has proposed to plant new evergreen trees.

Fence Permits

5415 Uppingham Street. 6-foot wooden fence on the left side of the property and **42-inch** steel fence on the right front side of the property.

Tree Removal Recommendations

Town Arborist, Dr. Tolbert Feather, has recommended that we remove the following Town Trees:

Tree #398, Flowering Cherry 32" base, located at 4804 Falstone Avenue.

Tree #400, Flowering Cherry 39" base, located at 4810 Falstone Avenue.

Permission to perform the work is on the Town Council Agenda for the February 6, 2012 Meeting.

Manager's Desk from page 6

Dog Regulations



Town's Dog Regulations

Please keep two things in mind regarding the walking of dogs within the community.

- Make sure your dog is on a leash when being walked around the neighborhood as per Montgomery County leash regulations. It is important to ensure the safety of pedestrians walking as well as other animals in the neighborhood.
- 2. As per the Town Code, please make sure that dog waste is disposed of properly and not left on Town sidewalks or on private properties within the Town. The Town has received several complaints about this, and we want to make sure it is curtailed to keep the community looking beautiful.

Preliminary Agenda

Regular Town Council Meeting

Somerset Town Hall - Monday, Febuary 6, 2012 - 7:30 p.m.

The Somerset Town Council will meet in regular session on Monday, February 6, 2012 at the Somerset Town Hall. Agenda updates are posted on the Town website: www.townofsomerset.com

Regular Meeting of the Town Council Council Work Session – 7:00 p.m. Council Meeting Convenes – 7:30 p.m.



left to right: Council members Bill Farley, Barbara Zeughauser, Cathy Pickar, Vice President Marnie Shaul, Alan Proctor

- 1. Motion: To approve the January 3, 2012 Regular Council Meeting Minutes 7:30 p.m.
- 2. Public Hearing: The Board of Supervisors of Elections will receive nominations for two Council positions and one for the Mayor's office for 2-year terms 7:35 p.m.
- 3. Discussion: Town Manager's February Financial Report 7:45 p.m.
- 4. Comments: Town Residents/Agenda Items 7:50 p.m.
- 5. Comments: Town Residents/Non-Agenda Items 7:55 p.m.
- 6. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of an application submitted by Guido Bracciale, 5800 Deal Place, for a replacement HVAC Unit 8:00 p.m.
- 7. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider a recommendation by the Council as the Local Advisory Panel to the Historic Preservation Commission on an application submitted by Joseph and Anne Yap, 4805 Cumberland Avenue 8:05 p.m.
- 8. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of a Proposal submitted by the Parks and Natural Resources Committee to amend the current Town Tree Replacement Plan 8:20 p.m.
- 9. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of the removal of the following two Town trees as recommended by the Arborist: 8:35 p.m.

Tree #398, Flowering Cherry Tree #400, Flowering Cherry

- 10. Public Hearing/Motion: To consider approval of a Proposal submitted by the Parks and Natural Resources Committee in relation to the maintenance of the island entrance to the Town of Somerset near Little Falls Parkway owned by Montgomery County Park and Planning 8:40 p.m.
- 11. Discussion/Motion: To consider approval for the Environmental Committee to begin the process to establish a Storm Water Management Plan for the Town of Somerset 8:55 p.m.
- 12. Discussion/Motion: To consider proposal submitted by McInturff Architects for the Town Pool House front entrance sign 9:10 p.m.
- 13. Discussion/Motion: To consider authorization of a Request for Proposals to review the Town's 2009 Traffic Calming Study and address subsequent issues 9:25 p.m.
- 14. Discussion: To consider introduction of an amendment to the Town Code in relation to traffic regulations on Warwick Lane near Cumberland Avenue and the Somerset Elementary School 9:40 p.m.

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- 15. Discussion/Motion: To consider authorizing the Mayor to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with the Village of Drummond in relation to traffic regulations on Warwick Lane near Cumberland Avenue and the Somerset Elementary School 9:50 p.m.
- 16. Discussion: To consider introduction of an amendment to the Town Code in relation to the establishment of a Swim Team Committee 9:55 p.m.
- 17. Discussion: To consider introduction of an amendment to the Town Code in relation to the establishment of emergency procedures for the installation of HVAC units 10:05 p.m.
- 18. Discussion: To consider introduction of an amendment to the Town Code changing the construction hours for some Federal holidays to be interior work only that does not disturb neighbors 10:15 p.m.
- 19. Discussion/Motion: To consider approval of a Memorandum of Understanding between the Montgomery County Department of Police and the Town of Somerset, Chevy Chase, MD, regarding the towing, storage, and disposition of abandoned, damaged, or seized vehicles 10:25 p.m.
- 20. Discussion: Mayor's Report 10:35 p.m.
- 21. Adjourn 10:40 p.m.

Key

Public Hearing Item: Agenda item where public comment is permitted.

Discussion Item: Agenda item limited to discussion among the Council, Mayor and Town Staff.

Motion Item: Agenda item requesting action, limited to Council discussion.

Comments: Opinions and Questions from Town residents.

This is a preliminary Agenda prepared to meet the Journal press deadline, which typically is two weeks prior to the next Town Council meeting. During this period, there will likely be changes to the timing of items, and some items may be added or deleted. Please consult the bulletin board on the Town Hall porch or the Town website for the most up-to-date Agenda.

Residents who wish to be present for a particular Agenda item are advised to arrive 15 minutes ahead of the item's scheduled discussion time as discussions sometimes run ahead of schedule.

Items marked * have related articles inside this issue of the Town Journal.